606 Since the son-in-law has the social status of a son in his wife's family, he has the right to expect his father-in-law to sponsor his career, even more than he expects this of his own father.

A daughter-in-law is expected to regard and treat her husband's father very much as her own father.

• 603 Grandparent and Grandchild. Because of the great difference in age between these generations, great respect is theoretically due grandparents. In practice, this may be flouted and great indulgence shown to grandchildren. Grandparents quite frequently help in rearing their grandchildren, tell them stories and teach them the Buddhist precepts.

The Life Cycle of the Individual

843 828 Birth and Infancy. When a woman is pregnant her dreams are considered to be especially significant. She is expected to remember those dreams that concern what her child will be like. The welfare of the child is forecast by some dreams. A dream of only one of things that normally come in pairs, such as earrings, bodes ill, possibly death, of the child in infancy. If the woman dreams of her viscera coming out it is indicative of a great future for the child. Persistent dreams of a particular deceased individual are indicative that the child will represent his reincarnation. In all forebodings of ill the normal counter-measure is to consult a Buddhist monk or an astrologer, who may give the woman an inscribed prayer (mantra) to keep or some amulet for the child to wear as protection.

843 Although village women need not avoid any specific foods during pregnancy, strong spices are regarded as harmful.

No supernatural means are employed to influence the sex of the prospective offspring. Certain signs are considered prognostications. If the pregnant woman's stomach appears pointed, a boy will be born; a flat, broad stomach indicates that a girl is in prospect.

Pregnancy is considered a time of great happiness; the woman is greatly indulged and pampered by all concerned.

844 When the time for delivery approaches, any other pregnant women in the household must depart, lest their presence impede labor. Normally the woman's mother, grandmother, or aunt, in addition to a midwife, assists at birth. A fire is prepared in the room in which delivery is to take place and is maintained for ten days.

844 846 As soon as delivery has occurred, the umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo knife. The afterbirth is wrapped in the mother's skirt and is buried at once in the cardinal direction associated with the day of the week of the baby's birth. The mother is fed an infusion of turmeric, and turmeric paste is rubbed all over her body. She is kept close to the fire and made very warm. For three days she is carefully watched to prevent her from sleeping heavily during daylight hours.

846 The mother is treated as a delicate invalid for about one month and, in some cases, for as long as three months. She is fed only white rice and dried fish. A soup of garlic and banana stems is drunk to promote the flow

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607 *Husband–Wife's Elder Sister.* This relationship tends to mirror a conflict between sex and age as status factors in Burmese culture. There is an implicit conflict between the husband's position *as a man* and his wife's elder sister's position, in many cases, *as his senior in age*, having a claim on outward respect and obedience. In practice this relationship is often cool and aloof in nature, very different from the free-and-easy one between husband and wife's younger sister described below.

Husband–Wife's Younger Sister. A man is expected to show great favor to his wife's younger sisters and display more interest in them than in his own sisters. He buys them presents, gives them spending money, and covertly he is expected to be on the lookout for prospective husbands for them. Quite frequently, the wife's younger sisters will accompany her and her husband when she marries, and all will live together. Although husband and wife's younger sisters engage in a great deal of mutual teasing and joking, the relationship does not assume a sexual aspect. Polygyny is very rarely practiced among the Burmese; [595] when it is, however, it takes the sororal form. The rather free-and-easy pattern of behavior between husband and wife's younger sisters sometimes gives rise to suspicion and gossip in the village, when a man and wife are not getting along well, that he is carrying on love affairs with his younger sisters-in-law.

Mother-in-law–Daughter-in-law. A daughter-in-law is definitely subordinate 606 to her mother-in-law; if they live in the same household, the mother-in-law is entitled to the best room and to be waited upon by her daughter-in-law. Significantly, the Burmese term for daughter-in-law, cwêimà, means literally "sweat woman."

Mother-in-law–Son-in-law. θamè, the term for son-in-law, means "desired son." A son-in-law is a privileged member of the family of his wife. His wishes are respected and his comforts looked after. His mother-in-law will instruct his [607] wife's younger siblings to show him respect and deference.

Father-in-law–Son-in-law. The son-in-law has the social status of a son in his wife's family. He has the right to expect his father-in-law to sponsor his career even more than his own father.

Father-in-law–Daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law is expected to regard and treat her husband's father very much as her own father.

Grandparent–Grandchild. Because of the great difference in age between 603 these generations, great respect is theoretically due to grandparents. In practice this may be flouted and great indulgence shown to grandchildren. Grandparents

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THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Birth and Infancy. When a woman is pregnant her dreams are considered especially significant. She is expected to remember those of her dreams that concern what her child will be like. The welfare of the child is forecast by some dreams: a dream of only one of things that normally are paired, such as earrings, bodes ill, possibly death, of the child in infancy; a dream of her viscera coming out indicates a great future for the child. Persistent dreams of a particular deceased individual are indicative of whose reincarnation the child will represent. In all forebodings of ill the normal counter-measure is to consult a Buddhist monk or an astrologer, who may give the prospective mother an inscribed *mantra* (prayer) to keep or some amulet for the child to wear as protection.

Although the Burmese woman need not avoid any specific foods during her pregnancy, strong spices are regarded as harmful.

No supernatural means are employed to influence the sex of the prospective offspring. Certain signs are considered prognosticative: if the pregant woman's stomach is pointed, a boy will be born, whereas a broad, flat stomach indicates a girl is in prospect.

Pregnancy among the Burmese is considered a time of great happiness; the woman is greatly indulged and pampered by all concerned.

When the time for delivery approaches any other pregnant women in the household must depart, lest their presence impede labor. Usually the woman's mother, grandmother, or aunt, in addition to a midwife, assists at birth. A fire is prepared in the room in which delivery is to take place and is maintained for ten days.

As soon as delivery has occurred, the umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo knife. The afterbirth is wrapped in the new mother's skirt and is buried at once in the cardinal direction associated with the day of the week of the baby's birth. The mother is fed an infusion of turmeric, and turmeric paste is rubbed all over her body. She is kept close to the nearby fire and made very warm. For three days she is carefully watched to prevent her from sleeping heavily in daylight hours.

The new mother is treated as a delicate invalid for about a month and, in some cases, for as long as three months. She is fed only white rice and dried fish. A soup of garlic and banana stems is drunk to promote the flow of milk. She is not permitted to read, sew, or to do anything that will "arouse or stir the blood."